

GBG NEWSLETTER – 26TH OCTOBER 2023



DCMS UPDATE ON WHITE PAPER

For those unable to join the GBG Members meeting yesterday, here's the update we shared following a discussion with the DCMS Land Based team this week.

Closed consultation timings:

- DCMS is currently reviewing the responses to the land-based consultation with a view to an early 2024 Government response.
- They are working to a similar response timescale for its consultation on online slots stakes limit.
- In terms of implementation, they won't necessarily wait for common commencement dates, and will look to introduce deregulatory changes as soon as possible. Where a Statutory Instrument is required, as long as it has been approved, its introduction will not be impacted by a General Election.

Levy Consultation:

- The current [consultation](#) runs until 14th December. The Government's response requires sign off from various government departments so that could impact the DCMS' aim of a response by the end of March 2024, however it is a priority for the Secretary of State to get this implemented.
- DCMS wants a levy framework which is clear, consistent and fair to all and welcomes evidence-based challenge to the proposed levy percentages, particularly in relation to B2B licence holders.

- We therefore need hard evidence from Members to support a case for 0.1% on all land based & suppliers as opposed to 0.4%

Machine Data Sharing:

- Agreement has been reached with the Department that the manufacturers, having sought the permission of operators first, will send the data directly to DCMS for amalgamating, anonymising and analysis (rather than to the Trade Bodies to do this amalgamation before it goes to DCMS).
- DCMS will share the amalgamated data with Trade Bodies to ensure it has been interpreted correctly and accurately.

GAMBLING COMMISSION UPDATES

Suicide reporting:

- Following the publication of [its response](#) to a consultation on suicide reporting and changes to self-exclusion, the Commission will publish further information on notification of deaths by suicide in advance of April so licensees are clear on the scope of the new requirements before they go live in April 2024.

Review of Gaming Machine Technical Standards (GMTS) & Machines Testing Strategy

- The Commission is proposing a 2 phased approach to this review: Firstly, to amalgamate all the current documents into one - aligning the format to the Remote Technical Standard (consultation @ Spring 2024, earliest implementation late 2024) and then consult on the role of session limits across Cat B& C machines and the role of other safer gambling tools.
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- We will be engaging with the GBG Machines Group on the draft consolidated GMTS and a draft updated Machines Testing Strategy which the Commission is also looking to update and seeking views on a series of questions posed by the Commission.

OMBUDSMAN DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT

We will be holding a meeting on Tuesday 21 November to discuss the Code drafted by the Betting & Gaming Council in more detail. Members are strongly encouraged to attend to understand how it will impact you and to input to the development of the Ombudsman's Code of Conduct .

DCMS is focusing on the scope (an Ombudsman that is sufficiently empowered and doesn't stray into Commission compliance territory), the financial redress and the reporting requirements of the Ombudsman.

As stated in the White Paper *"if (the industry led) approach does not deliver as we expect or shortcomings emerge regarding the ombudsman's remit, powers or relationship with industry, we will legislate to create a statutory ombudsman"*.

WESTMINSTER HALL DEBATE - THE FUTURE OF HORSERACING

[The transcript](#) from the debate on 25th October produced some interesting debates around affordability checks including:

- *"...his Department (DCMS) and the Gambling Commission seem to be peddling what I would only describe as drivel about affordability checks being frictionless or racing not being damaged. Clearly, there is damage being done"* (Nadhim Zahawi, MP)
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- “...the way that the Gambling Commission is bringing in these so-called affordability checks makes people move from gambling on reputable platforms into unregulated gambling. (Matt Hancock, MP)
- “This is betting frowned upon to such an extent that the government want to stick their nose in and find out whether I can afford to spend my money – its my money, after all – on betting? They do not check whether I can afford to buy a pair of shoes, a coat or suit or anything else” (Philip Davies, MP)
- “The point about being frictionless is essential. I reiterate my commitment that proposed checks will not be mandated across the sector until we are confident that they are frictionless for the vast majority of customers who will be caught by them” (Stuart Andrew, SoS)

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